THE DAILY CLIPS

January 9, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
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City Art Gallery displays works with ECU link

BY KELLEY KIRK-SWINDELL
The Daily Reflector

City Art Gallery will display "How it Happens," including the work of five artists with ties to East Carolina University, through Jan. 31. An opening reception for the exhibition will be held from 6-8 p.m. today.

The show's title comes from the gallery's mission to provide an educational component to each of its shows. Four of the five artists will be in attendance at the opening to explain the how they produce their work.

"We were interested in these five particular artists because their work is in five diverse mediums and because of their diverse relationship with East Carolina University," said Peg Hardee, co-owner of City Art Gallery.

Artists with work on display are Dr. Ranny Chitwood (photography), Linda Darty (metals), Richard Fennell (painting), Jeremy Fineman (ceramics) and Terry Smith (woodworking).

A wine tasting by Finelli's will also be held during the opening.

Dr. Randolph Chitwood

Chitwood is the director of the East Carolina Heart Institute and Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and a professor of surgery.

He has been an avid photographer for more than 30 years. While traveling throughout the world giving lectures, Chitwood tries to book a full day for photography, either at the beginning or the end of a trip.

Images on display at City Art Gallery include Lake Mattamuskeet, Botswana, California, New Hampshire and Tibet.
Linda Darty

Darty is the head of the metal design program at ECU and exhibits nationally and internationally. Her work is in the permanent collection of Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Museum of Art and Design in New York.

Darty is the author of “The Art of Enameling: Techniques, Projects, Inspiration.”

On display in the ”How it Happens” exhibition are five brooches made of sterling silver with enamelled elements and stones. She also has an enamel candlestick on display.

“It’s very sculptural,” Hardee said.

A BROOCH by Linda Darty.

CERAMIC PITCHER by Jeremy Fineman, master of fine art candidate at East Carolina University.

Jeremy Fineman

Fineman is a master of fine art candidate at ECU. His work has been sold through City Art Gallery for the past two years.

His ceramics are wheel-thrown altered forms, but are all fully functional.

“They are all casseroles, pitchers, cups, vessels. Everything goes in the dishwasher, the microwave and are completely versatile,” Hardee said.

As an environmentally conscious artist, Fineman has built a wood and waste vegetable-oil-powered kiln as part of his thesis.

A HANDMADE violin by Terry Smith.

Terry Smith

A professor of wood design at ECU, Smith has 10 stringed instruments on display at City Art Gallery. Included are dulcimers, a violin, electric guitar, flamenco guitar, baroque guitar and a hurdy gurdy (a wheeled fiddle). The instruments are made from maple, spruce, ebony, domestic and exotic hardwoods.

Smith recently received a Luther grant to teach an instrument-making class at ECU this semester.

Smith earned a master of fine art degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. His work is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution and the North Carolina Museum of History.

IF YOU GO!

What: Opening reception for “How it Happens”
When: 6-8 p.m. today
Where: City Art Gallery, 511 Red Banks Road
Cost: Free
Call: 353-7000

Richard Fennell

A North Carolina painter known for his landscapes, still lifes and portraits, Fennell earned his bachelor of fine art degree from ECU.

“For this show, we are focusing on his portrait work, but will also have his still life and landscapes,” said Hardee.

PAINTING BY Richard Fennell.

His work is held in numerous public and corporate collections including the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Duke University, the Kenan Collection at the University of North Carolina, R.J. Reynolds, Northern Telecom, Philip Morris and Bank of America.
Helping the home front

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, January 08, 2009

A good family relationship goes a long way when a family member is deployed to a foreign country.

A program at East Carolina University ultimately will help National Guard and Reserve families statewide cope with military deployment and family issues that come with it.

Instructors in the ECU in the Child Development and Human Relations department held a two-day seminar this week to train N.C. Cooperative Extension agents and military personnel to provide services to military families with members who are deployed.

"Essential Life Skills for Military Families" was created through a partnership between ECU, UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State and financed by a federal grant.

Bettie Ann Carroll, a professor in the child development and family relations department, oversees the program which will put more agents in the field to provide the services. The program, in its third year, has trained 50 percent of the agents in the state’s N.C. Cooperative Extension offices, Carroll said.

"From a military standpoint, a secure family relationship will not interfere with the mission," Carroll said. "The military member will be safer and more secure in theater."

The agents will work with families on financial skills, legal situations, problem solving and family relationships. The program was developed around what the National Guard and the Reserves said they needed, Carroll said.

Agents work with families of military members who are deployed in cooperation with local units.

About 15 people were trained during Tuesday and Wednesday sessions on campus.

Carroll said the training includes fun exercises agents can use with military families to keep their interest instead of conducting more boring lecture-style classes on family issues.

The agents took turns Wednesday afternoon leading sessions that they will use with families who need help with issues like finance and getting along.

Carroll will collect data on the effectiveness of the program as it helps hundreds of families all over the state. She said every county in North Carolina has at least one National Guard or Reserve family.

"We are hoping that the data will show that this makes a real difference in people’s lives and improves relationships," Carroll said.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.

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UNC wrestles with tuition increases

Some legislators are likely to disapprove of raising tuition by as much as 6.5 percent

ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - In crafting a tuition plan for the state's public universities, UNC system leaders generally have a sense of what sort of increase would be palatable to the legislators who control the purse strings.

Not this year.

UNC system officials face an added level of uncertainty this month because of rising unemployment and the recession as they consider campuses' requests to raise tuition and fees.

"I've heard some [legislators] say, 'If y'all raise tuition at all, you're out of touch,' " UNC system President Erskine Bowles said early into a tuition and fees discussion Thursday that lasted nearly twice the 90 minutes allotted for it. "Other people say that if you erode the university's quality, ... you will do long-term damage. There is no consensus."

UNC system leaders would like to avoid seeing the legislature modify whatever decision is made on tuition and fees. With no way yet to judge what ultimately will be deemed acceptable, the system's Board of Governors began Thursday its annual exercise of vetting tuition and fee increase proposals from member campuses.

But unlike in previous recession years -- 1982, 1990 and 2003 -- the university has set a rate-increase ceiling to guarantee some level of predictability and prevent too much financial burden from being placed on students. Tuition cannot rise more than 6.5 percent at any campus -- a limit that did not exist in 2003 when it went up 24.7 percent as a reaction to cuts in the state budget.

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Five universities, including UNC-Chapel Hill, want tuition increases for resident undergraduates this year that hit that 6.5 percent ceiling. Eight others want smaller increases, including N.C. State University, which is proposing a 3.6 percent increase, and N.C. Central University, which wants 3.1 percent. Three universities -- N.C. A&T State, UNC-Charlotte and Winston-Salem State -- do not want to raise tuition next year.
Campuses that raise tuition must use at least 25 percent of that new revenue for financial aid, and another 25 percent to supplement faculty pay. Student leaders at campuses asking for tuition increases said Thursday that students are willing to pay more.

"We the students are not looking for a cheap education, but a high-quality, affordable education," said Kent Williams, president of NCCU's student body.

University chancellors said money for faculty pay is particularly vital. James Anderson, hired last year as Fayetteville State University's chancellor, said the extra $118 each of his students would pay in tuition could make a real difference at an institution struggling now to do basic recruiting.

"We don't even have the resources now to bring faculty in for interviews," he said.

At NCCU, chancellor Charlie Nelms said faculty pay revenue that would come from the extra $69 every in-state undergraduate would pay in tuition under his campus's request would help stave off raids from other universities -- a common practice during economic downturns.

"It's a confluence of things that allow you to retain or not retain a faculty member," Nelms said. "But in this economy, the salary takes on an added level of significance."

The Board of Governors will discuss tuition and fees again and likely will make decisions at its February meeting.

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IN THE TRIANGLE, STATE UNIVERSITY COSTS COULD RISE

Proposed tuition and fee increases for resident undergraduates at Triangle UNC-system campuses.

CAMPUS2008-09 TUITION AND FEES2009-10 PROPOSED TUITION AND FEES

Percentage changeAmount of changeTotal
N.C. State University4,994.004.2 percent$212.00$5,206.00
UNC-Chapel Hill5,047.496.1 percent$308.17$5,355.66
N.C. Central University3,608.894.3 percent$155.32$3,764.21

NOTE: FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE ROOM, BOARD, BOOKS, TRANSPORTATION OR OTHER STUDENT EXPENSES.

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NCSU set to delve into deal with South Korea

JAY PRICE, Staff Writer  
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - N.C. State University got thumbs up Thursday to accept $1 million from the South Korean government to study the idea of building a campus at a $200 billion business and research park taking shape near the port city of Incheon.

The campus -- likely a collaboration by several universities -- would not only give NCSU an Asian operations hub but could expand the economic development reach of the whole state, university officials told members of a UNC Board of Governors committee.

South Korea would pay for all construction costs, and no money from the state of North Carolina would be required to build or operate the campus, university officials said.

The committee endorsed the idea unanimously. Approval by the full board today was regarded as no more than a formality.

It would be the university's first overseas campus, though NCSU has programs in several other countries, including India and China. The idea fits the university's strategy of creating international centers in strategic locations to make sure students and faculty are in step with the global economy.

The campus could also serve as an Asian entry point for other schools in the UNC system and for North Carolina companies, said NCSU Provost Larry A. Nielsen.

South Korea doesn't get as much attention as other Asian countries with fast-growing economies such as China, India and Japan, Nielsen said, but it's a particularly attractive location for several reasons.

For one, NCSU already has strong ties with South Korea; the country is one of its top sources of foreign students and is home to about 2,000 alumni. Some of them are highly placed in major companies such as Samsung, where four of the eight senior vice presidents are NCSU grads, Nielsen said.

The park where the campus would be built, the Incheon Free Economic Zone, is adjacent to a new airport that already is the world's third-busiest and is a short hop from other major Asian economic centers, including Tokyo, Beijing and Shanghai. It's also minutes from the South Korean capital, Seoul.

Research at the park will focus on information technology, biotechnology and advanced materials, making it a good fit for NCSU and businesses at Research Triangle Park, Nielsen said.

NCSU could provide training for North Carolina companies that want to expand into South Korea, according to a written proposal the university provided to the committee.

Chancellor James L. Oblinger told the committee that talks with South Korean officials had been under way since late 2006.

The South Korean government has told NCSU that in addition to the feasibility study, it's willing to pump another $4 million into planning and startup costs, spread over four more years. Nielsen said the university also was in negotiations with the South Koreans for another $1 million a year for the same length of time for biotechnology research.
Besides classrooms, South Korea also would build all labs, research facilities and housing for students and faculty.

The campus would likely include about five U.S. universities. Stony Brook University in New York recently agreed to accept a similar planning grant, and the South Koreans are in talks with others. Being one of the first could give NCSU an edge in shaping the campus, said Vice Chancellor Charles D. Leffler said.

The feasibility study will take about a year. Among the issues that university leaders will study are how to make it all work without using North Carolina money, what programs to offer and what facilities would be needed.

If the university staff thinks the idea will work, it would seek approval from the NCSU Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors.

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Zipcars available on Duke campus

From Staff Reports
Comment on this story

DURHAM - Zipcar, which is described as the world's largest car-sharing company, has arrived on the Duke University campus.

Four self-service vehicles are available for rent on Duke's West Campus: two hybrid Toyota Priuses and two Toyota Matrixes.

Chuck Catotti, director of event management at Duke, said the "green" aspects of the program give people who want to reduce their carbon footprint more transportation choices.

"When you talk to people about why they can't consider alternative transportation, people often have lots of reasons," said Catotti, who oversees parking and transportation services. "This is one of the ways that help lower the barriers for being able to participate in alternative transportation."

In Chapel Hill, UNC-CH has had Zipcars since 2004. They were available for faculty and staff members first. Students began using them in 2007.

To join Zipcar at Duke, users pay a $35 registration fee that is applied as a credit toward reservations in the first month. The cost to reserve a car is $8 per hour or $66 per day. Fuel, maintenance and insurance are included.

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Flu thumbs nose at a virus-fighting drug

DONALD G. MCNEIL JR., The New York Times

Comment on this story

The dominant strain of flu in the United States this season is mostly resistant to the leading anti-viral drug Tamiflu, and scientists and health officials are trying to figure out why.

The problem is not yet a public health crisis because this has been a below-average flu season so far, and because the Tamiflu-resistant strain, one of three circulating, is still susceptible to other drugs. But infectious disease specialists are worried nonetheless.

Last winter, about 11 percent of the throat swabs from patients with the most common type of flu that were sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for genetic typing showed a Tamiflu-resistant strain. This season, 99 percent do.

"It's quite shocking," said Dr. Kent A. Sepkowitz, director of infection control at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. "We've never lost an anti-microbial this fast. It blew me away."

The single mutation that creates Tamiflu resistance appears to be spontaneous, and not a reaction to overuse of the drug. It might have occurred in Asia, and it was widespread in Europe last year.

In response, the disease control agency issued new guidelines two weeks ago. It urged doctors to test suspected flu cases as quickly as possible to see if they are caused by the resistant strain.

The Tamiflu-resistant strain is called H1N1. Its resistance mutation could fade out, an agency scientist said, or a different flu strain could overtake H1N1 in importance, but right now it is causing almost all flu cases in the country, except in a few Western states.

Complicating the problem, anti-viral drugs work only if they are taken within the first 48 hours of infection. A patient with severe flu could be given the wrong drug and die of pneumonia before test results come in. So the new guidelines suggest that doctors check with their state health departments to see which strains are most common locally and treat for them.

"We're a fancy hospital, and we can't even do the A versus B test in a timely fashion," Sepkowitz said. "I have no idea what a doctor in an unfancy office without that lab backup can do."

If a Tamiflu-resistant strain is suspected, the disease control agency suggests using a similar drug, Relenza. But Relenza is harder to take; it is a powder that must be inhaled and can cause lung spasms, and it is not recommended for children under 7.

Relenza, made by GlaxoSmithKline, is known generically as zanamivir. Tamiflu, made by Roche, is known generically as oseltamivir.

Alternatively, patients who have trouble inhaling Relenza can take a mixture of Tamiflu and rimantadine, an older generic drug that the agency stopped recommending two years ago because so many flu strains were resistant to it. By chance, the new Tamiflu-resistant H1N1 strain is not.

"The bottom line is that we should have more antiviral drugs," said Dr. Arnold S. Monto, a flu expert at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. "And we should be looking into multidrug combinations."
AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

If you get the flu, antiviral drugs like Tamiflu can help you get better faster; they are also used for prevention in some cases. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an annual flu shot, administered before flu season begins, as the best way to ward off the flu.

During flu season, the CDC also recommends that you:

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

Throw tissues in the trash after you use them.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.

Avoid close contact with sick people.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

And if you do get the flu, the CDC says, stay home from work or school to avoid spreading the disease.

Related Content

- CDC: Influenza
- N.C. influenza update

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Leading THE WAY

What a difference 62 years makes: Today, four North Carolina medical schools are raising the standard of patient care and medical research.

BY KATHY GRANT WESTBROOK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE BROWN

JANUARY 2009 Our State 109
Last June, Senator Ted Kennedy came to North Carolina, not on a political mission or personal vacation, but for surgery at Duke University Medical Center for a malignant brain tumor. Kennedy could have stayed closer to home and had surgery at the highly respected Massachusetts General Hospital, but the fact that he chose Duke is indicative of the heights to which our state has risen in the field of medicine.

Long gone are the days when Tar Heels routinely traveled out-of-state to receive premium care; now, those seeking care come to us. Gone, too, are the days of limited education and training opportunities, which forced many aspiring doctors to leave North Carolina.

Today, our state is home to four renowned medical schools, located in Durham, Chapel Hill, Greenville, and Winston-Salem. These schools and the teaching hospitals with which they are associated are staffed by nationally and internationally known experts in a wide variety of medical fields. All four institutions repeatedly earn accolades for their high standards of patient care and for their advancements in education, research, and technology.

Targeting tumors
Duke is a name that's synonymous with medicine. The medical center is the teaching hospital associated with the Duke University School of Medicine, and together the two entities operate on the leading edge of technology.

Duke became the first medical center in the world last year to use a system called the Novalis Tx to deliver precise, high-dose beams of radiation to hard-to-access tumors located near critical structures, like the spinal cord, brain stem, or optic nerve. When treating these tumors, even a slight deviation in the treatment field can cause severe disability or result in the radiation actually missing the tumor, according to Dr. John Kirkpatrick, clinical director of radiation oncology at Duke.

Using the Novalis Tx to perform a process called stereotactic radiosurgery, “we can protect the normal surrounding tissues by delivering the radiation with extreme accuracy and precision to the tumor by the use of multiple, finely shaped radiation beams,” explains Kirkpatrick. The system further protects healthy tissue...
"While the technology is important, the most critical element in the care of the patient is the depth and breadth of expertise of all the people involved in his or her care."

by adjusting for a patient’s minute movements, like normal breathing. About 15 percent of the medical center’s patients who require radiation are now treated using the Novalis Tx. Physicians from around the world have visited Duke to see the system in action, and last October Kirkpatrick traveled to Japan to share Duke’s experience in radiosurgery with the Japanese Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology.

As impressive as the technology is, Kirkpatrick puts it in perspective. “While the technology is important, the most critical element in the care of the patient is the depth and breadth of expertise of all the people involved in his or her care, as well as their level of commitment.”

he says. “At Duke, we provide a highly competent, committed team of individuals in radiation oncology — nurses, physicists, and therapists, in addition to physicians — plus extraordinary surgeons, medical oncologists, radiologists, and other experts.”

Technology pioneer
The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University in Greenville and its teaching hospital, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, quickly claimed a position at the forefront of robotic-assisted surgery almost a decade ago, shortly after Intuitive Surgical, a company headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, introduced its da Vinci Surgical System.

Surgery performed with this system consists of several small incisions, one of which serves as an entrance port for a camera that provides magnified, 3-D images of the surgical field. Referring to the projected image, the surgeon — who is seated several feet from the operating table — manipulates da Vinci’s surgical arms to perform complex and precise tasks. The minimally invasive surgery typically results in less pain, scarring, blood loss, and risk of infection.

In May 2000, Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood Jr., ECU’s chief of cardiothoracic surgery, performed the United States’ first robot-assisted mitral valve repair; last June, he performed his 400th such operation. In addition, he’s helped train physicians from around the world on the procedure. Other surgeries, like hysterectomies and prostatectomies, are also performed at Pitt County Memorial Hospital using this system.

The hospital now owns two da Vinci Surgical Systems, while ECU owns one, used primarily for research and training.

Team up against cancer
In December 2007, the Brody School of Medicine and its Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center officially teamed up with the University
of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and its Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center to intensify the battle against cancer.

"The partnership … is a promising start to what we hope is a long and fruitful collaborative enterprise to enhance the quality of oncology care in the region and foster new research initiatives at both campuses," explains Dr. Adam Asch, professor of internal medicine and chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology at the Brody School of Medicine.

Asch notes that the partnership has already affected a number of tangible changes. "A few of the most evident are joint membership in both centers for several of our faculty, shared clinical trial oversight and review, and the development of a tissue procurement facility to facilitate research study on tumor specimens," he says. "The most important aspect of the relationship, however, is the constructive dialog that has begun between the institutions, aimed at identifying additional opportunities to improve cancer care and research."

Dr. H. Shelton Earp III, director of UNC’s Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, agrees, citing "the intellectual exchange between the two groups of clinicians and scientists" as key to the partnership’s success. Also important, he says, will be the installation of a common informatics system between the two centers to allow for a seamless exchange of data related to clinical trials and tissue procurement.

Other specific ways in which the centers will be working together are in the development of a survivorship program to ensure that cancer survivors are getting the best long-term care possible, and in the strengthening of a patient navigator program to help cancer patients who are minorities or of a lower socioeconomic status to negotiate the health-care maze.

Development abilities
Another area of focus at UNC is the study and treatment of developmental disabilities like mental retardation, autism, and Down syndrome. The Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD) was created by combining four existing programs: the Clinical Center for Development and Learning, TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-Handicapped Children), the Neurodevelopmental Disorders Research Center, and the Family Support Network of North Carolina.

Dr. Joseph Piven, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at UNC and founding director of CIDD, notes that the institute is unique in that it has a three-pronged mission: providing clinical services for people with developmental disabilities and their families, conducting research, and training clinicians and researchers. The comprehensive program has landed CIDD in the upper echelon of like organizations. "Of these kinds of institutes around the country, we’re considered in the top three, as far as resources, expertise, and the breadth of our operation," Piven says.

Cancer vaccine
Cancer research is also a top priority at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, located adjacent to North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem; together the two institutions make up the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

One project underway at Wake Forest involves the study of the effectiveness of
a vaccine to reduce breast cancer recurrence in patients who are determined to be HER2/neu positive, meaning they contain above-normal amounts of a protein that causes their cancer to be aggressive. Preliminary studies of the anti-cancer vaccine are promising.

The vaccine is administered to breast cancer patients within six months of the patients having completed all other treatments. While some forms of cancer treatment are notorious for their side effects, the anti-cancer vaccine has been shown to have minimal side effects, according to Dr. John H. Stewart IV, principal investigator of the study at Wake Forest. The one side effect about which patients are counseled is a local reaction (a rash) at the vaccine site.

Seven institutions — six in the United States and one in Greece — were chosen to participate in the study. Jonnie Rohrer, senior public relations manager for Wake Forest University's Comprehensive Cancer Center is one of only 41 such facilities in the country.

Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, explains how the Wake Forest Comprehensive Cancer Center became one of the participating sites: "We were selected as the only non-military site in the country to participate in the breast cancer vaccine trial because we have a growing and developing tumor immunotherapy program, and this trial fits into our objective to reduce the recurrence of cancer through the development of vaccines."

It's worth noting that the Wake Forest Comprehensive Cancer Center has met the stringent criteria related to research, education, and outreach required by the National Cancer Institute to be named one of just 41 Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the United States.

What's more, UNC's Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center are also members of this elite group — further evidence of our state's impressive accomplishments in the medical field.

Kathy Grant Westbrook is a freelance writer who lives in Four Oaks.

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